



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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What You Need to Know BEFORE Becoming a Home Inspector

Are you thinking about becoming a home inspector? Maybe you were once in construction and think this would be a natural fit for you. Maybe you saw an ad for home inspector training in a magazine or newspaper and it sounded interesting. Or maybe you just lost your job and you heard that home inspectors make a lot of money.

Remember the old adage “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is?” This may very well be one of those circumstances where this applies.

Home inspections are done for a variety of reasons. They range from simple to complex and are common prior to real estate transactions. A good inspector must be knowledgeable about plumbing systems, electrical components, roofing, building construction and maintenance, business practices, structurally destructive pests and the conditions conducive to their development.

Home inspectors must be physically able to inspect all areas of a house and be comfortable crawling through small, dark crawl spaces. They must be able to develop accurate and legal reports and diagrams of the structures they inspect. Most importantly, they must be able to accept the financial responsibility that comes with missing a problem they should have found during their inspection.

The financial responsibility aspect of becoming a home inspector cannot be overstated. Yes, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) requires you to obtain financial coverage for the pest inspection part of your inspections but there are four important things to consider:

- Number 1: The pest inspection coverage is expensive and hard to get.
- Number 2: There is no requirement in WSDA law or other state law that this financial coverage includes the other aspects of a home inspection. What this means is that you could be individually responsible for other types of errors and omissions.
- Number 3: Sooner or later, you will miss something during an inspection that results in a financial loss to a homebuyer.
- Number 4: One guess who the homeowner will hold financially liable for their loss, which may exceed hundreds of thousands of dollars and include the hassle of litigation.

The decision to become a Home Inspector in Washington should not be made lightly. It is not for everyone. Completing a quality home inspection requires expertise, skill and adequate financial coverage. If you conduct even one less than quality inspection, you could face financial ruin. If you are confident that you possess the traits necessary to conduct quality home inspection, be sure to comply with all WSDA requirements for structural pest inspectors. These requirements are detailed at <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/LicensingEd/CaSpiInfo.htm#spi>.